

to be observed in Buying and Selling.

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### Rules concerning Buying Commodities.

### Rules Concerning Selling Commodities.

1. IF you would not transgress Scripture rules in buying; then first take heed that you do not discommend those Commodities that are very good, which you are about to buy, that so you may bring down the price of the Commodity, and get it for less than it is worth: There is a known place of Scripture for this, in Prov. 20. 14. *It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.* People in Solomons time they were so wicked, that when they came to the market to buy any thing, the buyer he would discommend the Commodity, and say, *It was naught*, though it were very good and saleable; but when the seller was gone, then he would boast of what a good penny worth he had bought, and the like.

2. Do not make vows and protestations, that you will give no more for a Commodity, than what you have first offered, when afterwards you will give more. This is a very common thing with Trades-men: You shall have a man come to a shop, and cheapen a Commodity, and the buyer he will say, *He will not give a farthing more*, and the seller will say, *He will not take a farthing less*, and yet both the buyer and seller take a loss. Now, this is no other than a palpable and downright lye.

3. Do not give counterfeit money for those Commodities you buy: this you have an example of in Abraham, when he was to buy the field in Machpelah of Ephron the Hittite, for a burying Place, in Gen. 23. 16. *saith Abraham, I will give thee four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.* And therefore you transgress Scripture rules, if you know you have brass money, or counterfeit gold about you, and yet pay it away for commodities, you sin in doing so, though you your self took it for Commodities.

4. Do not give for a commodity less than in your conscience you think it is worth; It is an open oppression in buying, when you seek to bring a Commodity under its due value and worth. Abraham when he was to buy the Cave in Machpelah of Ephron, saith he, *I will give thee the worth of it in money.* And so David when he was to buy the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, 2. Sam. 24. 24. saith he *I will buy it of thee at the full value of it.*

5. Do not long deter the paying for those Commodities which you have bought, when thou hast by the wherewithal to pay it: there is an excellent place for this in Prov. 3. 27, 28. *withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it: say not unto thy neighbour, Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee.* This text is referred to works of mercy, but it hath relation to buying and selling, and trading in the world: If you owe a man money for a Commodity, you ought to pay him, and not to let him come day after day for it: and go without it, when you have it by you, 2 Kings. 4. 7. it is the badge of a wicked man in Scripture, *not to pay his debts*, in Psal. 37. 21. *The wicked borroweth and payeth not again.*

6. Do not engross a Commodity, that is, do not buy all of a Commodity into your own hands alone, that by that means you may sell the Commodity at your own price; this is a meer oppression, destructive to a Commonwealth, and to all trading; the Scripture condemns this in Prov. 11. 26. *it is spoken there of Corn-mongers; saith the Text, He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him; but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.* In Solomons time there were Corn-mongers that when corn was cheap, would go and buy all the corn in the country, and would keep it up, and sell none till corn was very dear; now, saith the Text, *He that doth thus, the people shall curse him for it; but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.* Now, it is no sin in it self to engross a Commodity, thereby to sell it the cheaper, but for a

man to engross a Commodity, merely thereby to advance the price of it; this is such an oppression, that the people shall curse him for it.

7. Do not in your buying a commodity take any advantage of the mistake or oversight of the seller; as suppose you should come to a shop and buy so many yards of cloth, or the like, and he should give thee more than is thy due, or take less money of thee than is his due, you should take no advantage of him in such a case, but restore it again: for, if you take any thing more from him than you bought of him, it is theft; or if you give any less for the Commodity than you bargained for, it is theft: there is an excellent place for this in Gen. 43. 12. Jacob when there was a famine in the land, he sent his sons down into Egypt to buy corn, and Joseph he knowing his brethren, filled their sacks with corn, and put the money which they brought for the corn, in the mouth of their sacks again; and when they came home and found their money in the mouth of their sacks, they told their father Jacob of it; then saith he to them, *Go back again and take double money in your hand, and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hands, for peradventure it was an oversight: here was a conscientiousness in Jacob.*

8. Do not buy any Commodities on the Lords Day; it is true, upon urgent occasions to maintain life either in man or beast, this is lawful; but to buy any thing, that you may well be without till monday, in this case you sin, if you buy any thing on the Lords Day; Neh. 10. 31. *And Nehemiah entered into an oath, and the people with him, that if any of the people of the land brought wares, or any victuals to sell on the Sabbath day, that they would not buy of them;* and as the law did not give them leave to break the Jewish Sabbath, so neither doth the Gospel give us leave to break the Christian Sabbath; and therefore I cannot see but that it is a sin, for men to buy either wine, or beer, or pepper, or mustard, or any other trivial things (which they may well be without) on the Sabbath Day.

9. Do not in buying a commodity, work upon the necessity of a poor man, that hath need of money: this is a great sin in Trades-men; they know that a poor man wants money, and he must sell off his ware, or else he cannot buy bread for his family, and therefore they will work upon his necessity, and will not buy the Commodity of him, unless he will sell it cheaper then he can afford it; now this is a great oppression, in the 25. of Levit 14 *If thou buyest any thing of thy neighbour, or sellest any thing to thy neighbour, thou must not use oppression.* There is an oppression in buying as well as in selling, it is a great oppression for rich men to work upon the necessity of a poor man, to make him sell cheaper then he can afford, or else to buy nothing at all of him.

10. Do not buy those things which are not fit to be bought and sold: as first, Do not buy stolen goods, they are not fit to be bought; if thou knowest that the goods that are to be bought are stolen goods, they are not to be bought, but to be restored; as the receiver is as bad as the thief, so the buyer is as bad as the thief: Secondly, Do not buy monuments of Idolatry, for they are not fit to be bought, as Crosses, Beads, and Images, and Crucifixes, and the like. Thirdly, Do not buy Men for slaves, this the Lord reproveth in Amos. 2. 6 *They sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; and so in Deut. 27. Thou shalt not steal thy brother and make merchandise of him:* We should therefore take heed lest we split our souls upon any of these rocks, and let us labour that among all our buyings, we buy that which Christ bids us buy, in *Esay 55. 1. Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye unto the waters, and he that hath no money, come buy, and eat, yea come buy wine and milk without monie, and without price.*

1. IF you would not transgress Scripture rules in selling Commodities; then in the first place do not multiply words in selling; the Scripture affords many examples for this, as in Gen. 23. 15. Abraham, as I told you before, when he was to buy the cave of Machpelah, of Ephron, he told him that it was worth four hundred shekels of silver, and Abraham presently gave him so much current monie with the merchant: And so God Himself takes upon Him to be a seller, in Zech. 11. 12. *if you think good, saith God, Give me my price; if not, forbear;* multiplicity of words is needless; In a multitude of words (saith Solomon) there is sin: Men that loiter and frolic in a shop.

2. Do not commend and over-praise a commodity, when you know in your conscience, that there is a fault in it! this is a vicious carriage in the seller, when he shall use abundance of fine words to set out a Commodity when it is not good. As the buyer should not discommend a Commodity when it is good; so should not the seller over-praise and commend a Commodity, when it is naught.

3. Do not sell thy Commodities by false weights nor by false measures; do not keep a deceitful ballance, or a deceitful measure; this is condemned in Amos. 8. 5. *They make the Ephah small, and the Shekel great, and falsifie the balances by deceit:* and so in the 20. of Prov. 10. *Divers weights, and diverse measures, both of them are alike an abomination unto the Lord.* Now, this is spoken, not that the weights and measures in themselves are an abomination to the Lord, but only those men that do use, and keep, and sell by those weights and measures; and therefore the Lord gave a special law for this, to all that did follow trades in Israel, in Deut. 25. 14, 15. *saith God there, Thou shalt not have in thy house diverse measures, a great and a small, that is, a great measure to buy by and a small one to sell by; Thou shalt not have in thy bag diverse weights, a great and a small, but thou shalt have a perfect and a just weight, and a perfect and a just measure shalt thou have, that thy dayes may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee; and so in Micah. 6. 10. Is there yet, saith God, the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure, which is an abomination unto the Lord.*

4. You are to make conscience in selling a Commodity, not only that you do not speak falsely, but also that you do not speak in an equivocating manner: It is an observation that Luther hath upon these words, *Let no man defraud his Brother*, saith he, there are many Shop-keepers, that will not lye, but they will equivocate, very much: you shall have a Tradesman, to sell off a Commodity he will get a partner with him, and he shall offer him so much for a Commodity, and then he will tell the next man that comes for that Commodity, that there was one offered him so much for it but even now; and then they will say likewise, it cost me so much, when it may be they had other things with it of a greater value and price, and it may be they had a great deal of time given them to pay for it, Whereas the buyer payes ready money; and many other equivocating words they use, which is as bad as lying.

5. In selling a Commodity, do not work upon the ignorance or simplicity of the man that comes to buy the Commodity; but if you discern him to be unskillful, rather use him the better, than the worse; in Zeph. 1. 9. *saies God there, In the same day also will I punish all those young men, that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters houses with violence and deceit;* and so in 1 Thes. 4. 6. *Let no man (saies the Apostle) go beyond or defraud his Brother in any matter, for the Lord is the avenger of all such;* and so in 2 Pet. 2. 3. *And through covetousnesse shall they with fained words make merchandise of you,*

whose judgement lingereth not. When men shall work upon the ignorance of the buyer, and so advance the price of the Commodity; this is a great sin.

6. Do not imbase a Commodity from its primitive worth and goodness, and yet sell it at the full price, as if it were good, thereby to get the more by it: this the Scripture condemns in Amos. 8. 6. *They sell the refuse of the wheat; the Corn-mongers, in those times they would pick out the best of their wheat, and yet sell the worst at the full price of the best: now, this the Lord condemns; and so in Esay. 1. 22. They mingle wine with water, and dross with silver: the Scripture condemns this, to imbase a Commodity from its primitive goodness, and yet to sell it at the full value of the best.*

7. Be not among the first that shall raise the price of a Commodity; this I hinted to you before, in Prov. 11. 26. *He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him; but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.*

8. Be not so eager in selling of your Commodities, that you cannot content your selves to sell on the six dayes of the week, but you must sell on the Sabbath Day likewise; be not like those in Amos. 8. 5. *saies, When will the new moon be over, that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath be over, that we may set forth wheat?* and so in Neh. 13. 15. *In those dayes, saith the Prophet saw I in Judah, some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.* Now, this is against your common selling-houses, and shops of mean trades, that sell by retail, that make nothing of selling small trifling things on the Sabbath Day but this is a great sin.

9. When you are found out to be deceitful in your dealing, do not justify your deceit; many men, if you come to them, & tell them, that they sell dearer then their neighbours, they will tell you, that they do not; or if you tell them that the Commodity is not good which you bought of them, they will say, it is as good as they can afford for the price, and the like; this is condemned in Ephraim, in Hos. 12. 7, 8. *Ephraim is a Merchant, the ballances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress, and yet he saith, I am become rich, and I have found me out substance, and in all my labours they shall find no iniquity in me, that is sin; you should not justify your deceit.*

10. Do not sell those things that are not saleable; as first, do not sell spiritual things, for they are not saleable, as in *Act. 8. 20. Simon Magus* when he would have bought the gift of the holy Ghost with money Peter saith to him, *Thy money perish with thee, because thou thoughtest that the gift of God might be purchased with money.* Secondly, do not sell monuments of Idolatry, as Crosses, and Beads, and Images and Crucifixes, and conjuring Books, and the like; they are not fit to be sold, as in *Act. 19. 19. many also of them that used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men and they counted the price of them and found it to be 50000. pieces of silver;* this is spoken here of conjuring Books; and notwithstanding they were of so great a value, they would not sell them, but burned them. Thirdly, Do not sell thy self as Ahab did, to work wickednesse; for you are not your own, but Gods; and therefore you must glorifie God in your bodies, and in your souls which are Gods. Fourthly, You must not sell stolen goods. Fifthly, You must not sell those things that are for no other use, but for to commit sin in the using of them; as for to sell stuffe to paint harlots faces, is a sin, because it is for no other use but to commit sin in the using of it.

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